

Aristotle's *pambasileia* and the metaphysics of monarchy

Abstract: Aristotle's account of kingship in *Politics* 3 responds to the rich discourse on kingship that permeates Greek political thought (notably in the works of Herodotus, Xenophon and Isocrates), in which the king is the paradigm of virtue, and also the instantiator and guarantor of order, linking the political microcosm to the macrocosm of the universe. Both models, in separating the individual king from the collective citizenry, invite further, more abstract thought on the importance of the king in the foundation of the polity, whether the king can be considered part of, or separate from, the polis, and the relationship between polis and universe. In addressing these aspects of kingship theories, Aristotle explores a 'metaphysics of monarchy', part of the long-running mereological problem of parts and wholes in the construction of the polis, and connecting his account of kingship to his thought on citizenship and distributive justice within the polis.

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Aristotle's theoretical thought on monarchy occupies a peculiar position in the *Politics*, at the end of Book 3, which investigates the role of the citizen within the *polis*, largely against the background of democratic Athens.¹ Aristotle completes his radical contribution to the development of political theory with this critical engagement with the novel kingship theories from other Greek political theorists of his time. He responds to new models of the king as exemplar of virtue developed by Isocrates and Xenophon, which in turn develop the account of kingship developed by earlier thinkers, in which the king generates originary processes, uniting the people and instantiating cosmic order in the human world.² Aristotle, in responding to the rich discourse on kingship that permeates Greek political thought, must therefore address both the 'virtue' model in which the king is the paradigm of virtue, and the 'cosmic' model in which the king is the instantiator and guarantor of order, linking the political microcosm to the macrocosm of the universe.

Both these theories of kingship, in separating the individual king from the collective citizenry, invite further, more abstract thought on the political ontology of kingship in Greek political thought: the importance of the king in the foundation of the polity, whether the king can be considered part of, or separate from, the polis, and the

relationship between polis and universe. In addressing these aspects of existing kingship theories, Aristotle explores and develops what might be identified as a 'metaphysics of monarchy', contributing to the long-running mereological problem of parts and wholes in the construction of the polis (cf. *Politics* I), and connecting his account of kingship to his thought on citizenship and distributive justice within political frameworks.

Politics 3's highly theorised discussion of monarchy in the extreme form of *pambasileia* (3.13-18) is presented as a (possibly counterfactual) counter-example to the 'republican' phenomenon of equal citizens organising their affairs in the *polis* context (3.1-12).³ It also explores the difficulty of combining virtue and cosmic models of kingship in the same person, and whether such a person could be accommodated within the structures of the polis, through an analysis of the problem of inequality and incommensurability that arises when an individual possesses capacities sufficiently different in quantity or quality from other individuals to prevent that individual from being considered a member of the same class. The 'virtue' model proposed by Xenophon and Isocrates provides a counter-example that Aristotle uses to deepen his own exploration of *polis* citizenship and the construction of a unified community, and to provide a potential counter-argument to his summation argument (3.11) with its emphasis on communal deliberation.

This argumentative context is given insufficient weight in one group of existing interpretations of these chapters, through interpreting *pambasileia* historically, as a response to the rise of Macedon and Alexander the Great, or as part of Aristotle's political sociology. Such a focus fails to account for Aristotle's metaphysical and ontological analysis of kingship.⁴ It is clear that the historical phenomenon of the powerful individual ruler contributed to interest in theorising monarchy, but Aristotle's five-fold typology of kingship (and exploration of tyranny) makes it clear that many of the examples typically cited as provoking interest in single-person rule, such as Jason of Pherae, could not be considered as candidates for *pambasileia*. The often-tempestuous careers of rulers such as Jason, and the prevalence of a range of forms of single-person rule in the cities of western Greece and the *ethnos* states bordering the Greek world, provided source material and examples for all fourth-century Greek political theorists.⁵ Aristotle engages with this existing discourse, in

which Macedon is already a presence, based on interest in Alexander's predecessors Amyntas and Philip, and in Dionysius II of Syracuse, a further favoured example, but none of these historical figures are considered as representatives of the elusive category of the *pambasileus*.⁶

A second set of modern responses focus on the instantiation of virtue in the absolute monarch, but use this to position Aristotle as a monarchist in a similar vein to other Greek theorists of monarchy.⁷ However, reading these chapters as a response to Isocrates' and Xenophon's model of virtue monarchy shows that Aristotle is criticising that model rather than supporting it, and exploring the tensions between the virtue model of monarchy and cosmic elements that persist within it.⁸ He further includes a critique of Plato's response to the virtue monarchy model (in *Laws* 3) and his appropriation of the cosmic monarchy model.⁹ In the *Laws*, Plato permits monarchy only as a temporary transitional measure necessary to establish the rule of law, when the lawgiver and *kosmios turannos* (4.710d7) work together to establish the best-possible regime.¹⁰

Idealised and mythical exemplars are a feature of this discussion. Virtue theorists such as Isocrates, Antisthenes and Xenophon used contemporary and historical exemplars, idealised to the extent that they scarcely differed from more obviously mythical or imagined monarchs such as Isocrates' Egyptian Busiris.¹¹ Even notionally empirical parts of the *Politics* feature kings, such as Athens' Codrus and Persia's Cyrus the Elder, a highly mythicised figure, drawn from this discourse.¹² In this section, candidates for Aristotle's final form of kingship are limited to those who have structurally initiated a political community at its moment of foundation, performing a transformational act of unification, and in doing so entered into political myth.¹³

Aristotle further emphasises both the mereological and the religious dimensions of kingship in the terminology he develops to identify this form of kingship. The name *pambasileia*, an abstract term he derives from poetic addresses to important gods, draws first on the connotations of mystic religion in the existing use of the noun, then the implication of excess and extremity of *pan-* compounds, with their implications for political proportion and commensurability, and thirdly gives a nod to the Pindaric tag Νόμος ὁ πάντων βασιλεύς (Fr. 169.1), which Plato's Callicles cites to argue for a law of nature in which stronger rule the weaker (*Grg.* 484b1-c3).¹⁴

These resonances of the noun *pambasileia* link Aristotle's concept to the powerful imagery that is associated with the concept of kingship, irrational and mythical elements, which attach to this extreme form in particular, and imbue it with links to cosmic ordering and the divine.¹⁵ However, in his detailed discussion Aristotle identifies the kind of rule that might be exercised by such a king in more everyday language of relationships within city and household. He describes a kind of rule that is τοῦ βασιλέως τοῦ κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ βούλησιν πάντα πράττοντος (3.16.1287a1-2) or ἓνα... κύριον... πάντων (3.15.1286a1-2).¹⁶ Most translations suggest that πάντων, governed here by κύριον, refers to things, rather than persons.¹⁷ But with the collapse of the distinction between household and *polis*, the domestic force of *kurios*, a power exercised over persons, leaks into the relationship between ruler and ruled in the city, where one is more properly *kurios* over an office or institution.¹⁸ If the form of rule implied by *kurios* is kingship, it is properly exercised over persons not offices or objects, and implies both ruling and mastery. Once more, Aristotle explores the consequences of Plato's assimilation of all forms of rule, in order to reject it.¹⁹

Attempts to answer questions about one and many, citizen and *polis*, ruler and ruled, and the distinctions between them, in highly abstract terms, therefore contribute to Aristotle's metaphysics of monarchy.²⁰ The first problem addressed is the structural one of the relationship between the citizen and the *polis*, and whether the *polis* itself is a single entity, 'Athens', or, as typically expressed in Greek, the plural citizens, 'the Athenians'.²¹ Invoking a king, as the instantiation of one-over-many, could provide a solution to this difficulty, through the founder monarch's original unification of the previously scattered villages into a single body politic (as in Theseus' synoecism of Athens). Aristotle's abstract outline of the city's development (1.2.1252b15-27) acknowledges this foundational function of kingship but notes its diminishing importance in more developed political communities. Here he emphasises that the founder is the one responsible for the greatest good (ὁ δὲ πρῶτος συστήσας μεγίστων ἀγαθῶν αἴτιος, 1.2.1253a30-31); but this is a single instance always set in the distant past. As with the first claims to authority Plato reviews in the *Laws* (3.690ac), the claims of kingship belong to more primitive societies, or even to simple households, and have been superseded in the complex form of the *polis*.

Aristotle also argues that the *polis* is a single entity, the natural result of natural processes, and logically prior to the individuals from whom it is formed, a part of his argument that has continued to trouble readers of the *Politics*. We can set Aristotle's natural *polis* against Hobbes' Leviathan, who is a 'mortall God' and 'Artificiall Man'.²² Does Aristotle's *pambasileia* describe the rule of an artificial person acting as sovereign? Whether political and legal entities are natural or artificial is an open debate at this time, if Plato's arguments against the atheists in *Laws X* are any guide to fourth-century issues in political thought.²³ If there is a sovereignty relation in the self-governing Greek *polis*, working out what persons or entities it connects is complicated by the ambiguous reference of *kurios* already noted.

Problems of unity and plurality are both central to Greek political thought, particularly that of Plato, emphasised by Socrates in the *Republic* and further echoed in the metaphysical concerns of the *Statesman*; for Plato and other writers, the failure of the unified city in civil war (*stasis*) is as much a metaphysical problem as a political one.²⁴ The Greek view that unity is better than plurality is persistent, seen in metaphysical *endoxa* cited by Aristotle, such as the Pythagorean table of opposites, and in the priority of the circle and sphere as shapes.²⁵

While present-day political theorists largely wish to reject or play down the presence of metaphysical concerns in Aristotle's political thought, this approach denies him the use of his own classificatory structures.²⁶ When Hobbes began this line of argument, it was as an attack on Aquinas, and there still seem to be sectarian religious tinges to the debate now.²⁷ Contemporary political scientists in the US such as Stephen Salkever contrast empiricism with metaphysics as mutually exclusive rival methodologies for Aristotle's political science.²⁸

The second metaphysical problem of these chapters ponders the nature of the king, the special individual who brings unity and order to the *polis*. How can one man be seen to be worth more than many others, and what kind of characteristics legitimate such judgement? On what authority can some individuals dispense redistributive justice? What distinctive qualities entitle the king to his special status, or do extreme quantities of the same qualities as subjects do the same? While *polis* ideology broadly led the Greeks to reject the monarchical models followed by ethnos states and empires such as Egypt and Persia, the fourth-century development of a theory of virtue

monarchy re-introduced the question of kingship. In reading these chapters within their intellectual context, and accepting Aristotle's linguistic pointers to his ontological and mereological concerns about kingship in the polis, this paper aims to develop a richer understanding of Aristotle's contribution to the Greek discourse on kingship.

Aristotle's discussion of monarchy

Aristotle's detailed discussion of monarchy fills out the final five chapters of book III, which as a whole is dedicated to exploring the role of man as citizen within a *polis* framework. This excursus into what is, in a fourth-century Greek context, a marginal (Evagoras) or non-*polis* (Philip) phenomenon sits uneasily in this discussion, complicating the interpretation of these chapters. But the discussion of *pambasileia* is not simply an argumentative exercise or *reductio ad absurdum*.²⁹ These chapters explore a possible negation of the summation argument (3.11.1281a40-b3), which argues for the superiority of mass deliberation within the *polis* over individual decision-making, echoing the cases made by Plato's Protagoras and Thucydides' Pericles.³⁰ The usual counter-case, denying political capacity and judgement to the masses, was more familiar, and seen in Herodotus' and Thucydides' criticisms of Athenian democracy's decision-making.³¹ But in 3.13 Aristotle explores the contrary view, and positions *pambasileia* as the political consequence that would follow if one man were actually superior to the multitude in respect of political decision-making, or possessed an excellence incomparable (ἀρετήν... μὴ συμβλητήν, 1284a5-6) with that of other humans (3.13.1284a3-17).³² But can humans really differ as much as lions and hares do, in Antisthenes' anecdote (3.13.1284a15-17), so that it would be ridiculous for the powerful to admit the weak to political equality?³³ And if any humans met this standard, would that make them a beast or a god, as in *Politics* I?³⁴

The nature of incommensurable excellence is also problematic. Aristotle's text provides some guidance here, limiting the range of virtue to that exercised in political activity (κατ' ἀρετήν ὄντες καὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν δύναμιν, 3.13.1284a9-10). The καὶ is epexegetic, so that the inequality created by the man of supreme virtue is clearly specified as and limited to that arising from excellence in political capability.³⁵ Elsewhere, Aristotle seems more concerned by the size or type of the gap, and the metaphysical consequences of such distinctions between notionally equal political

actors, than by the precise quality or qualities that cause it. This problem is opened here at the start of the discussion and remains in play until the close of the book.

With the idea of the man of incommensurable excellence in play, Aristotle starts by surveying the known forms of monarchy (3.14.1284b40-1285b19). These forms of monarchy are actually much less straightforwardly historical than he presents them, as often happens with supposedly empirical evidence in the *Politics*.³⁶ Spartan kingship (1285a3-16) is a limited form of monarchy, more a combination of generalship and priesthood, while barbarian kingship is more akin to tyranny (1285a16-29); no example is given, but we can all read Persia as the intended archetype for this form.³⁷ The third form is *aisumneteia*, an archaic form of elective tyranny (1285a29-b1), of which Pittacus of Mytilene, perhaps better known as a sage and proponent of virtue, provides the example.³⁸

The fourth type of monarchy, instantiated by the hereditary monarchs of the Heroic Age (1285b3-b20), is more truly *basilikē* than the previous forms, because it features kings whose authority is established by election (αἵρεταί, b3) or ancestry (πάτρια, b5), and who rule within the law (κατὰ νόμον, b5) over willing subjects (ἐκόντων, b3; ἐκούσiai, b5). This type of monarchy resembles Xenophon's definition (*Mem.* 4.6.12), except that it is positioned firmly in the past, and seems to identify a king such as Agamemnon.

These heroic kings acted as benefactors (εὐεργέτας, b6) to their communities, and agents of political unification or colonisation (τὸ συναγαγεῖν ἢ πορίσαι χώραν, b7-8). A further element of their rule is their role in administering justice (τὰς δίκας ἔκρινον, b11). But this form of monarchy was itself subject to political change, as the evolution of the *polis* stripped away the powers that citizens consented to transfer to their *basileis*. It seems that kingship already floats somewhere between the historical and the mythical; neither the sage Pittacus nor the implied Homeric characters of the fourth type are strictly historical, and much of the detail of kingship in the subsequent examination of *pambasileia* refers to kings who fit this fourth, heroic, type.³⁹

So, when Aristotle goes on to introduce a fifth and radically different form (1285b29-33), this distinction is not as strong as he suggests.⁴⁰ He now focuses on the mereological and structural considerations in play from book 1: ὅταν ᾗ πάντων κύριος

εἰς ὅν (1285b29-30); 'whenever there is a one who is truly sovereign over all', in Barker's translation.⁴¹ This invocation of both sovereignty and structure is echoed at the close of the discussion at 3.17.1288a26-28. Although it may be risky to make use of composition or style in the analysis of Aristotelian texts, this does look like ring composition, both demarcating a section and emphasising what is important within it.⁴² What is important about the supreme monarch is his structural function in the ordering of society, the way that he is set over the many.

Platonic and Aristotelian arguments against monarchy: 3.15-16

Between the listing of forms of monarchy in 3.14 and the closure of the discussion of the supremely virtuous man lie several pages of somewhat disorganised argumentation. 19th century textual critics suggested that 3.15 and 3.16 were doublets, two versions of the same material.⁴³ However, a careful reading reveals subtle differences that contribute to Aristotle's argument. The two chapters have the same structure, with the analysis of a theoretical problem followed by historical problems, but there are subtle differences of approach that are worth exploring. Chapter 3.15 explores the Platonic question of whether it is better to be ruled by the one best man or the law, and provides Aristotle's response to this problem. Chapter 3.16 re-examines the question with a closer focus on the specific difficulties caused by the possibility of a *pambasileus* within a city of equal citizens. Each chapter also engages with historiographic *topoi* of kingship and tyranny, linking Aristotle's analysis into the broader discourse of kingship.

Aristotle's first move at the start of chapter 3.15 is to simplify the analysis of kingship by dropping the intermediate forms of monarchy to focus on the extremes, which he identifies as Spartan monarchy and *pambasileia*.⁴⁴ The Spartan kind is dismissed as a permanent generalship (στρατηγὸν αἰδίον, 3.15.1285b38-39), and only the final case of *pambasileia* remains under discussion, identified as a form of constitution – but one which gives rise to some difficulties.⁴⁵ Is it better to be governed by the best man or by the best laws (1286a8-9)? This question points back to the Eleatic Stranger's assertion in the *Statesman* in favour of the best man, and continues Aristotle's critique of Plato's arguments.⁴⁶ Plato there identifies the best man as the possessor of *basilikē epistēmē*, who rules without recourse to written law (294a6-8).⁴⁷

Plato is very clear that the kind of knowledge required by the expert statesman will be achieved only by a small minority, just like other forms of expertise (e.g. 300e7-10); the more usual outcome will be second-best imitation of this rare knowledge. Plato's model fails to satisfy Aristotle as a sufficiently robust response to the identification of kingship and law. The integrative function of the Platonic statesman, transforming the disparate many citizens into a single body, and the specialist knowledge he requires, set him apart from non-rulers without this capability and knowledge to a suspicious degree. Plato may have failed to leave the divine kingship model altogether behind, transforming the metaphysical distinction of the shepherd king into the epistemological distinction of the expert king, the king who possesses *basilikē epistēmē* in the best case. For in exercising his knowledge he may be exhibiting the ordering capabilities of a cosmic king.

Aristotle agrees that there are limits to the competence of law, but disagrees with Plato about the solution to this gap. First, Aristotle wants to limit the validity of laws established by a good lawgiver, so that they are sovereign only insofar as they do not deviate from the ideal (3.15.1286a21-23). Secondly, Aristotle foresees the necessity of making judgements outside the established legal framework to deal with complex cases (a24-25), although unlike Plato he does not regard the ability to decide such cases as the preserve of the *politikos*.⁴⁸ He is much less sanguine than Plato about the possibility and reliability of single-author law codes; elsewhere in the *Politics* he downplays the usefulness of the ideal constitutions created by more recent political theorists.⁴⁹ The archetypal lone lawgiver, Lycurgus of Sparta, receives special criticism from Aristotle, who points out that his constitution fails to deal adequately with women, and was most likely plagiarised from the Cretans.⁵⁰

Rather than rely on the *politikos* to decide difficult cases that cannot be settled with reference to law, Aristotle prefers mass decision-making bodies. He returns to his previous argument for the wisdom of the multitude (3.11.1281a39-b15), although here he inverts the point made in the earlier chapter; there, the addition of good men to the crowd improved the mixture (3.11.1281b34-38), whereas here the addition of bad men or emotions cannot destroy the overall capability of the group (3.15.1286a31-33). Perhaps responding to Plato's realisation in the *Laws* that there was the possibility of corruption of the *politikos*, Aristotle argues for the greater

incorruptibility of the multitude (3.15.1286a31-b1); like a larger body of water, the multitude dissipates pollution, while a single man is subject to his passions. If the judging group is limited to those who are good both as citizens and as men (ἀγαθοὶ καὶ ἄνδρες καὶ πολῖται, a39), rather than the crowd (ὄχλος, a31) originally envisaged, the resistance to corruption may be even greater.⁵¹

This goes against the traditional view that one man judging on his own is less likely to suffer from *stasis* than the multitude (ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν στασιάσουσιν ὁ δὲ εἰς ἀστασίαστος, 3.15.1286b1-2), a view that Ross places in quotation marks as the position against which Aristotle argues.⁵² Plato supports this view in the *Republic*; the guards' community of property renders them *astasiastos* (5.464e1), whereas the oligarchic man's character flaws render him liable to internal *stasis* (8.554d9).⁵³ In the *Statesman* citizens who participate in politics while lacking expert knowledge are described as *stasiastikous* rather than *politikous* (303c2). In the *Laws*, Plato shifts away from entrusting judgement to a single corruptible man, moving closer to Aristotle's position, but he never adopts the stronger arguments against monarchy that Aristotle presents in 3.16, because he has rejected human monarchy beyond the temporary *kosmios turannos*.

Aristotle goes on to consider whether it is, 'as it seems to some', against nature for one man to rule over those who might, as equals, expect a turn in ruling (οὐδὲ κατὰ φύσιν, 1287b9-12). This presentation parallels that of 1.6, on slavery by convention, where Aristotle presents the arguments congruent with his own as the views of others. Aristotle seems more willing to accept that slavery is natural than that monarchy is, presumably because the typical *polis* contained more slaves than monarchs. But again, the issues of 1.2 remain – what qualities determine that an individual is outside the range of what might be considered human?

In chapter 3.16 Aristotle begins to analyse the specific arguments for *pambasileia*, the identification of qualities that a single ruler might need as the one who is sovereign and governs at his own discretion (1287a1-2, 9-10), in the place of the rule of written law or the greater capabilities of the assembled mass of citizens. Aristotle presents arguments against *pambasileia* as belonging to others (δοκεῖ τισιν, 1287a10), but, as these other anti-monarchists seem to be well-equipped with Aristotelian arguments, he moves away from the Platonic focus on the factors such as knowledge that

distinguish the king from his subjects, towards an analysis of the consequences of the gross and unnatural (οὐδὲ κατὰ φύσιν, 1287a10-11) inequality represented by the *pambasileus*' presence within the *polis*.⁵⁴

This issue was first trailed in the assessment of the virtuous man in 3.13; as described above, he is wronged by being deprived of rule by those unequal to him in virtue, in terms of political capability (κατ' ἀρετήν... καὶ πολιτικὴν δύναμιν, 3.13.1284a9-10). But Aristotle is here more concerned with the proportionate treatment of equals and the assessment of proportionality between unequals, than with the wrongs done to the notionally unequal. Equality and like treatment of natural equals are fundamental within the *polis*, and presuppose law, because the arrangement that delivers them is itself law (1287a18). Aristotle is concerned to ensure that human passion is eliminated from this process, and law is a mechanism for ensuring this, because, he claims, it delivers reason without desire (ἄνευ ὁρέξεως νοῦς ὁ νόμος ἐστίν, 1287a32). He thus sets out a case against *pambasileia* that would remain valid even if an actual *pambasileus* were found; the historical examples from the previous chapter provide a process for dealing with the unequal within the city, by forcibly excluding them.

Historical examples

Aristotle follows his theoretical arguments in both these chapters with counter-examples of monarchy's practical problems, drawn largely from Herodotus, possibly filtered through the *Cyropaedia*. Aristotle's historical model of kingship (1286b8-13) places it in the past, when good men were more rare and it was more likely, in the context of smaller communities, that one man would be outstanding as a benefactor and take responsibility for the cohesion of the community.⁵⁵ However, these examples are abstracted and theorised from other texts, rather than empirical observations.⁵⁶

Chapter 3.15 closes with two prime concerns raised in Greek discussion of kingship and tyranny, from Herodotus to Xenophon, succession (3.15.1286b22-27) and the protection of the monarch (3.15.1286b27-40). Herodotus, in his over-riding theme of the decline of empires, is concerned about the diminishing returns offered by dynastic succession; for every Cyrus a Cambyzes, for every Darius a Xerxes. He seems to support elective monarchy; or at least those monarchs of whom he approves, such as Deioces, Psammetichus and Darius, are selected by some sort of group deliberative

process, even if a highly oligarchical one. Xenophon, too, in noting the decline of Cyrus' empire, presents Cyrus' sons as lesser men than their father (*Cyr.* 8.5).

The concern about using bodyguards is more typical of Greek worries about tyranny and the practical impossibility of kingship as a phenomenon distinct from tyranny. The presence of a bodyguard symbolised the separation of ruler and ruled; bodyguards might be needed to protect a tyrant from overthrow, as in the case of Hiero (Xen. *Hiero* 6.9-11, 10.1-3), or to shield a king from direct interaction with his citizenry, as with Herodotus' Deioces (1.99.1) and Xenophon's Cyrus, with his double bodyguard of Assyrian eunuchs and the pick of Persian infantry (*Cyr.* 7.5.58-68).⁵⁷

The topos examined at the close of 3.16 is the more Aristotelian topic of friendship and its relation to kingship; again, this derives from earlier discussions. The nature and possibility of friendship for the leader and the king is a major theme of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, for example: Cyrus' rise to power is assisted by his friends, but when his status changes to that of an absolute monarch, his relationship with his friends changes too (marked most strongly at 8.2.13-14 where his Persian friends prostrate themselves to him for the first time) Here, for Aristotle the problem of friendship completes the exploration of the king as a problematic unequal presence in the city.⁵⁸ Aristotle draws on Xenophon's and Herodotus' presentation of the role of the king's friends.⁵⁹ For Herodotus, friendship is a form of political strength, but also creates dependency and weakness; Darius' decision to grant guaranteed access to his co-conspirators later weakens his rule (3.84.2-3). Aristotle shows that monarchs use their friends and supporters to provide additional eyes and ears (3.16.1287b29-30), a procedure which undermines any claim to act entirely individually as a sole ruler.⁶⁰ The king transforms himself into a composite being, just as the deliberating citizens do (3.11.1281b5-7).

Aristotle's own analysis of friendship in political contexts, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, permits only a limited form of friendship between incommensurable individuals (*EN* 8.7.1158b29-1159a12). King and subject must necessarily be incommensurable under a monarchical constitution, which is itself justified by the incommensurable excellence of the monarch. The friendship between them must be limited to euergetism, an important component of kingly virtue, but not as robust as

friendship between equals. The nature of the inequality between kings and subjects restricts the kind of friendship Aristotle allows them (καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν βασιλέων· οὐδὲ γὰρ τούτοις ἀξιοῦσιν εἶναι φίλοι οἱ πολλοὶ καταδεέστεροι; 1159a1-2). The precept that it is friends who have community (*EN* 8.9.1159b31) will cause problems for the king within the community of the *polis*.⁶¹

The impossibility of friendship for tyrants was a topos of Greek thought, central to Xenophon's Hiero the tyrant (*Hiero* 3.1-6, 5.1-2, 6.2-3). But Aristotle extends the problem of friendship between the unequal to good forms of kingship as well. The ruler's need for friends undermines his singularity; he is no longer the solitary advance piece on the board, as in the primitive city (1.2.1253a6). If he has friends, they must be his political or natural equals, and thus undermine his claim to his unique status (1287b33). If he has friends, he has some form of equality or commensurability with them, and so his claim to kingship fails; the friends whom he uses and incorporates into his composite being must enjoy friendship of the most limited type, that created by the types of act of beneficence with which Cyrus ensnared his supporters.

The *pambasileus* in the political imaginary

After these arguments against monarchy, Aristotle counters with arguments which connect his earlier description of the man of outstanding virtue with the idea of kingship.⁶² These arguments address the contemporary model of virtue monarchy and show how the virtue monarch can be incorporated into the *polis*, although they continue to draw on examples, such as Deioces and Theseus, deployed by other authors.⁶³

Aristotle hints at an original position in which the rational choice for citizens is to choose rule by the man of outstanding virtue, rather than to insist that they themselves rule and are ruled in turn (3.17.1288a15-19). This requires the presence of an individual or family whose virtue is incommensurable with that of the other citizens.⁶⁴ The entire framing of this argument suggests that it is not a situation that Aristotle expects to arise in the present. Where this situation does occur is in political foundation narratives, in imaginary settings that explore the aboriginal and primitive past, responses to the possibility of something resembling a Hobbesian state of nature. Thus, while the political excellence of Herodotus' Deioces seems distinct from

fourth-century character virtues, Isocrates in his *Helen* provides the story of Theseus, a unifying monarch told as that of an exemplar of character virtue. This account of Theseus' kingship, pre-dating Aristotle's *Politics* by several decades, creates a picture of the kind of virtue monarchy that Vander Waerdt and Newell wish to find in Aristotle; Xenophon's Cyrus also does so, though in a more complicated way. For Isocrates, Theseus' monarchy is the result of the virtue of the individual and his individual choices, rather than the instantiation of cosmic order through an individual.

Aristotle attempts to deal with both accounts of monarchy, cosmic and virtue, perhaps because they are fused in the figure of Xenophon's Cyrus, although his overall focus is more on the consequences of the status gap between king and subjects and its consequences for the *polis*, than on its precise causes. The peculiar mereological properties of the *pambasileus* are emphasised; in Barker's translation, 'A whole is never intended by nature to be inferior to a part; and a man so greatly superior to others stands to them in the relation of a whole to its parts' (3.17.1288a26-28).⁶⁵ The *pambasileus*, as a whole, should be set over the collectivity of the citizens as parts. His rule should not be turn by turn but a single rule (κύριον εἶναι μὴ κατὰ μέρος τοῦτον ἀλλ' ἅπλῳς, 3.17.1288a29).

Aristotle closes his chapter by returning to the problem of banishing the man of outstanding qualities (1288a24-6), explored more fully at 3.13.1284a26-30, using Herodotus' example of Periander's warning to Thrasyboulos (Hdt. 5.92), which conveniently expresses inequality between individual merit in terms of relative height of ears of grain.⁶⁶ This problem had also surfaced in later treatments of Theseus, in which his unification of the city angers Athens' wealthy and poor alike, and his euergetism is not enough to secure his rule (Plutarch *Theseus* 32.1-2).⁶⁷ Aristotle's arguments are based on an appeal to these examples not so much as historical data but rather as elements in the Athenian political imaginary.

However, the criterion of possession of virtue (and perhaps this would apply to any other single quality, as outlined at 3.13.1284a3-10) seems to create something of a trap in Aristotle's account. If the candidate *pambasileus* or extremely virtuous man (and we should not assume their identity) is distinct from the other citizens by virtue of his possession of a greater amount or degree of the value chosen as a criterion, as discussed in 3.13, he is not sufficiently distinct to be incommensurable and thus falls

within the scope of the political distribution of participation within the city. If his distinctiveness lies in the possession of a quality that can't be compared (3.13.1284a5-6), of a different kind rather than of a different quantity, that qualifies him for *pambasileia*, but also problematises his relationship with the city, because his inequality is not one of degree, but one of fundamental difference, such as god to man or beast, like the *apolis* man (1.2.1253a1-29). The ostracised citizen possesses disproportionate qualities of the same characteristics as his fellow citizens, rather than distinctively super- or sub-human qualities of a different kind. Nonetheless, he is still made to leave the city in the interests of political order and the just distribution of political goods.

Quite what it takes for virtue to be possessed in a way that is *μὴ συμβλητήν*, or what form the *politike dunamis* that equates to this virtue is (3.13.1284a5-6), is left open (and Aristotle does not think that there is necessarily just one such possible quality, 1288a23-4; different qualities might apply under different constitutions, for example). If it is of the same kind, there will be comparability through geometric equality; it is only if it is different in kind that incommensurability is guaranteed to arise. If this is the case, we resurrect the shepherd king and return to traditional monarchy: both Newell's and Vander Waerdt's analyses fall straight into this trap. Vander Waerdt goes so far as to argue that the virtuous ruler/king rules precisely through his possession of a different kind of virtue from that of the citizens. His 'heroic virtue' is superior in kind to the civic and philosophical virtue that the citizens are aiming at.⁶⁸ In Vander Waerdt's model, the citizens are able to develop their virtue and achieve the *telos* of *eudaimonia* through the leisure afforded to them and protected by the rule of the *pambasileus*; he in turn, because he is aiming for a different kind of virtue achieved through ruling, does not lose anything as a result of being unable to attain philosophical virtue.

Aristotle's willingness to counter distinct statuses for different humans might provide some backing to such readings of the virtue arguments. The problem is that Aristotle himself does not even here generate a model that permits individuals of radically different kinds to interact within the city, unless they are considered equal *qua* citizens, in which case geometric equality enables their inequalities to be addressed at a practical level. He is best interpreted as exploring whether the metaphysical

difficulties of cosmic or divine monarchy still pertain to the virtue monarchy developed by Isocrates and others, rather than whole-heartedly supporting it himself.

The distinctive status of heroic kings provides a comparison. This is the type of kingship identified by Aristotle that is closest to *pambasileia*. Special status for kings does not worry writers of epic. Their kings are typically identified by non-human attributes that link them to divinity. Homeric epithets tag them as *dios*, *diotrephes*, and so on.⁶⁹ These are not the attributes of ordinary people, but of special individuals with a distinctive position in the cosmic order, mediating between human and divine, establishing good order in the cosmos, as Odysseus describes (*Od.* 19.109-114).⁷⁰ The surplus of meaning of kingship is happily accommodated in the heroic world, and the cultural status of epic reproduces and maintains this surplus meaning. But bearers of these qualities in the poetic imaginary worlds of epic and drama are acceptable in a way that a living, breathing example would not be within the very different world of the *polis*.

In requiring the *pambasileus* to act differently from other humans and not to seek the fulfilment of human desires and goals, those who advocate that the *pambasileus* be the bearer of a non-human form of virtue open up the problem of allotting a distinct ontological status to the ruler. That this is a difficulty for cosmic kingship models is recognised in Herodotus' story of the Egyptian king Amasis, the transformed gold basin and the unstrung bow (*Hdt.* 2.172-4, *Pol.* 1.12.1259b8-9).⁷¹ Amasis both wishes his innate distinction to be recognised, and to be able to set it aside when it suits him, leading to dissatisfaction from his subjects.

Of course Aristotle, unlike Hobbes, is not committed to the fundamental equality of humans, and could happily accept this distinction within the human world.⁷² The prospect of a special status for the *pambasileus* should be considered alongside Aristotle's other arguments which allot a distinct status to individuals or groups, such as the natural slavery argument or his assessment of the distinctive roles and capabilities of women. The natural slave lacks the human capacity of reason to such an extent that he loses some of the social goods allotted to humans, and specifically can achieve virtue only through the agency of others (*Politics* 1.6.1254b16-27, 1.13.1259b32-1260a4). Women possess reason but of a distinctly second-rate kind (*Politics* 1.13.1260a9-14). In the cases of both slaves and women, the question

becomes whether either their natures or their qualities are of the same kind, assessed against the assumed norm of the male citizen, but merely possessed in different quantities, or of a different kind, so that quantity is irrelevant.⁷³ These distinctions are important in Aristotle's assessment of the part-whole relationship of the household and its constituents.

Conclusion

Aristotle's exploration of kingship in *Politics* 3.13-18 represents a critical response to the virtue kingship theories of Isocrates and Xenophon, parallel to that of Plato in the *Statesman* and the *Laws*. Aristotle draws on the existing Greek discourse of kingship, in which kings perform cosmic processes of political ordering and unification, connecting them to the divine, in order to explore the metaphysical problems that would arise from incorporating a king of incommensurable virtue within a city of equal citizens. He thus links this section to his earlier mereological concerns about the parts and whole of the city. Aristotle's concern with kingship is therefore more abstract than many commentators on these chapters have observed, providing a thought-experiment that is distinctive from the political processes of the Athens-like Greek polis that is the concern of the earlier part of *Politics* 3.

Both Plato and Aristotle include responses to the theory of virtue monarchy within political theories that emphasise the role of the citizen rather than the ruler in politics, and the rule of law rather than that of individuals as the guarantor of access to the good life and a just existence within the context of the *polis*. But Plato in the *Laws* removes the prospect of the philosopher king, and only permits his *kosmios turannos* the temporary power to drive through the reforms necessary to bring about the rule of law. Only the god, fully entitled to the divine and cosmic resonances of kingship, can be called a king.

Aristotle, on the other hand, recognises that kingship is a complex phenomenon that goes beyond the limited forms for which he can identify historical examples. He takes the contemporary concept of virtue monarchy and places it in a new theoretical context. Taking the citizen, striving for a share in rule and just and equitable distribution of goods within the city, as his starting point, he shows that groups of equal citizens can develop the same capacities (of knowledge and analysis) as those

attributed to monarchs in both cosmic and virtue models, turning themselves into a composite but single entity through deliberating together and amassing all their virtue. In this model the most difficult decision for such a composite political body to take would be to surrender decision-making powers to an extraordinary individual. The lack of historical examples of such a decision renders historicising readings of the account of *pambasileia* problematic, but Aristotle's theoretical sources contain political myths describing such an outcome; the thought-experiment has already been run by Herodotus (Deioces), Isocrates (Theseus) and Xenophon (Cyrus), and persists in political myth. Rather than look to history or contemporary events for candidate absolute monarchs, readers of the *Politics* should look to the myths which embedded such monarchs in the political imaginary of cities such as Athens.

¹ M. Schofield, 'Aristotle and the Democratization of Politics', in B. Morison and K. Ierodiakonou (eds.), *Episteme, Etc.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 285-301.

² What I have identified as the 'cosmic model' of monarchy derives from the Homeric model of kingship in which kings are marshallers of the people (as Agamemnon and Menelaus, κοσμήτορες λαῶν (*Iliad* 1.16), setting the people in military order, but by the time Aristotle is writing the use of *cosmos* language by natural philosophers links it to both the heavens/universe and to ordering processes imposed on human societies, cf. C. H. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), pp. 219-239, G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: two types of argumentation in early Greek thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

³ M. Schofield, *Saving the City: Philosopher-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*, (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 100-03. The transmitted text of the *Politics* is increasingly interpolated as book 3 progresses (E. Schütrumpf, *Aristotle: Politik. Buch II und III.*, (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1991), pp. 570,

577); the closing chapter, 3.18, is largely a later addition. This probable interpolation weakens the case for a pro-monarchy reading of 3.17, as later responses to the advent of Hellenistic kingship may contaminate Aristotle's text. The subsequent books 4-6, in contrast with this section, contain some discussion of the practicalities of maintaining stability in monarchical regimes good and bad.

⁴ Historicist Macedonian readings: V. Ehrenberg, *Alexander and the Greeks*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1938); H. Kelsen, 'The Philosophy of Aristotle and the Hellenic-Macedonian Policy', *International Journal of Ethics*, 48 (1937); A. B. Bosworth, *Alexander and the East: the tragedy of triumph*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996). More recent interpretations: S. Gastaldi, 'Il re "signore di tutto": il problema della *pambasileia* nella *Politica* di Aristotele', in S. Gastaldi and J.-F. Pradeau (eds.), *Le philosophe, le roi, le tyran: études sur les figures royale et tyrannique dans la pensée politique grecque et sa postérité*, (Sankt Augustin: Akademia Verlag, 2009), pp. 33-52; C. H. Kahn, 'The Normative Structure of Aristotle's *Politics*', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' Politik: Akten Des XI Symposium Aristotelicum*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), pp. 369-84; V. Laurand, 'Nature de la royauté dans les Politiques d'Aristote', in E. Bermon, V. Laurand, and J. Terrel (eds.), *Politique d'Aristote: famille, régimes, éducation*, (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2011), pp. 71-87; D. B. Nagle, 'Alexander and Aristotle's Pambasileus', *L'Antiquité Classique*, 69 (2000), 117-32 at pp. 127-29; J. Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 343-44. P. Carlier, 'La notion de *pambasileia* dans la pensée politique d'Aristote', in M. Piérart (ed.), *Aristote et Athènes = Aristoteles and Athens*, (Fribourg: Séminaire d'Histoire ancienne de l'Université de Fribourg, 1993), pp. 103-18 provides a careful historical reading arguing against identifying Macedonian monarchy and the *pambasileus*.

⁵ Aristotle uses Jason of Pherae (*Pol.* 3.4.1277a24) as an example of the distinction between tyranny and private life.

⁶ For example, fourth-century rulers used as exemplars by Isocrates include Archidamus and Nicocles as speakers, and Jason of Pherae (*To Philip* 119-120), Dionysius of Sicily (*Nicocles* 23, *Philip* 65, *Archidamus* 44), Amyntas of Macedon

(*Archidamus* 46, *Philip* 106), and Cyrus the Elder (*Philip* 66, 132, *Evagoras* 37-38), but Philip of Macedon assumes a central importance in his later work.

⁷ W. R. Newell, 'Superlative Virtue: The Problem of Monarchy in Aristotle's 'Politics'', *Western Political Quarterly*, 40 (1987), 159-78; P. A. Vander Waerdt, 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', *Phronesis*, 30 (1985), 249-73. Nagle, *Alexander*, pp. 118-19 incorporates both readings by separating virtuous man and king.

⁸ Gastaldi, *Il re "signore di tutto"*, emphasises the structural significance of the monarchy chapters to Aristotle's political thought as a whole.

⁹ Bosworth, *Alexander and the East*, pp. 105-07 and P. Christodoulou, 'La construction de l'image du roi idéal au IV^e siècle av. J.-C. et l'avènement de la royauté hellénistique', (Thèse de doctorat, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2009), pp. 300-17, link Aristotle's thought on kingship to Alexander's claimed divinity, but this is an unwarranted inference.

¹⁰ The careful structure and argument of *Laws* 3 deserves separate consideration, but particularly relevant here is Plato's engagement with specific theorists through the critique of their exemplars that constitutes the Athenian Stranger's highly structured historical narrative: Isocrates through the account of Messenian/Spartan kingship (drawing on Isocrates' *Archidamus*), and Xenophon in the account of Persian kingship (drawing on the *Cyropaedia*), both examples used in each author's accounts of virtue kingship which Plato represents as ultimate failures. *Laws* 3 can thus be read as a critique of the use of historical examples as paradigms in political analysis, couched in narrative form; Plato discards the use of such examples in favour of a non-historical golden age (4.713c2-714a9). This is a broader interpretation of Plato's engagement with history than that suggested by Cynthia Farrar (C. Farrar, 'Putting history in its place: Plato, Thucydides and the Athenian *politeia*', in V. Harte and M. S. Lane (eds.), *Politeia in Greek and Roman Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 32-56).

¹¹ On Xenophon: V. J. Gray, *Xenophon's Mirror Of Princes: reading the reflections*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); C. Nadon, *Xenophon's Prince: Republic and Empire in the Cyropaedia*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001); on Antisthenes: H. D. Rankin, *Ant[h]isthenes Sokraticos*, (Amsterdam: Hakkert,

1986); G. Giannantoni, *Socratis et Socraticorum reliquiae*, (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990), Vol. 4 pp. 295-307.

¹² *Pol.* 5.10.1310b31-40. Although Aristotle does not make much explicit use of Cyrus, Xenophon's analysis of Cyrus rests on treating him as such a foundational figure.

¹³ Machiavelli (*Prince*, Chapter 6) provides a list of candidate founder-rulers: Cyrus and Theseus, Romulus and Moses; despite extensive discussion of Alexander as a founder in the preceding chapters, he does not include him in this list.

¹⁴ The noun *pambasileus*, and its feminine form *pambasileia*, both appear in earlier works as ritual titles of gods. Newman suggests that in referring to τῆς παμβασιλείας καλουμένης (3.16.1287a8) Aristotle is noting earlier usage of the term (W. L. Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), vol. 3, p. 279). Zeus, in a fragment of Alcaeus addressing a king, is the *pambasileus* (παμβασίλῃ) son of Cronus (Alc. Fr. 2 Diehl); more significantly, the Clouds in Aristophanes' *Clouds* are addressed as both *despoinai*, the feminine form of *despotes*, and *pambasileiai* (ὧ δέσποιναί... ὧ παμβασίλειαί, 356-7, cf. 1150); Aristotle acknowledges the mystic and Pythagorean tone of the religious language of the *Clouds*, in which Socratic philosophy is presented as being in the service of a mystery cult and the chorus turn out to be goddesses of justice. Both nouns also perform the same function in the Orphic hymns (see A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: myth, ritual and comedy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 102-33; Bowie notes Adeimantus' critique of Orphic texts and their reception within *poleis* at *Resp.* 2.364e3-365a3). Carlier notes the divine overtones in Aristotle's secular use of the word (Carlier, *La notion de pambasileia*, pp. 108-09). That *pambasileia* is used to address a range of goddesses in the Orphic Hymns, usually taken to be late Hellenistic works, confirms the religious connotations of the word; Rhea (14.7), Semele (44.1), Hera (16.2), Hygieia (68.1), Physis (10.16, cf. line 1, ὦ Φύσι, παμμήτειρα θεά) are all addressed as such. The earth itself is *pambasileia* (χθόνα παμβασίλειαν, 11.2, 18.6) in addresses to Pan and Pluto. The masculine noun *pambasileus* was later used by the church fathers as a way to address their god. *Pan* compounds suggest that something is beyond the size appropriate to its apparent kind; Xenophon's Pantheia is an extreme of (divine) virtue, while for Plato, πάμμεγα (*Ti.* 26e4-5) describes both the

length and the totalising claims of Timaeus' speech, while the division of weaving in the *Statesman* is παμμήκης (*Plt.* 286e1, cf. παμμέγεθες *Prm.* 164d4; Melissa Lane, in *Method and Politics in Plato's Statesman*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 75, notes the theme of proportionality developed in the *Statesman*). On Pindar see M. Gigante, *Nomos Basileus*, (Napoli: Edizioni Glauk, 1956), pp. 150-53.

¹⁵ Paul Ricoeur suggests that metaphor operates to generate linguistic 'surplus value', without the writer necessarily being aware of the full implications of what may seem to be 'dead' metaphors (*Interpretation Theory: discourse and the surplus of meaning*, (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976); *The Rule Of Metaphor: the creation of meaning in language*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 337).

¹⁶ Newman (*The Politics of Aristotle*, p. 279) notes the related παμμήτωρ=πάντων μήτηρ, (*A. Pr.* 9; also an epithet of Rhea in an Orphic Hymn) by which example παμβασιλεύς would =πάντων βασιλεύς. At *Rhet* 1.7.1365b37-1366a1 Aristotle defines *monarchia*: μοναρχία δ' ἐστὶν κατὰ τοῦνομα ἐν ᾗ εἷς ἀπάντων κύριός ἐστιν· τούτων δὲ ἢ μὲν κατὰ τάξιν τινὰ βασιλεία, ἢ δ' ἀόριστος τυραννίς.

¹⁷ Both Barker and Jowett translate πάντων as 'all things/matters' (in S. Everson, *Aristotle: The Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), and R. F. Stalley (ed.), *Aristotle: Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), respectively).

¹⁸ Cf. Sophocles *OC* 1040-41, in which Theseus promises to restore Oedipus as *kurios* over the kidnapped Antigone and Ismene: οὐχὶ παύσομαι/πρὶν ἄν σε τῶν σῶν κύριον στήσω τέκνων. *Kurios*, like *pambasileus*, was adopted by the early church as an address to god.

¹⁹ It has long been argued that book 1 of Aristotle's *Politics* is a detailed response to Plato's argument (*Plt.* 259d) that rule over city and household are the same; see C. Natali, 'La Struttura Unitaria Del I Libro Della *Politica* Di Aristotele', *Polis*, 3 (1979-80), 2-18, M. Schofield, 'Ideology and Philosophy in Aristotle's Theory of Slavery', in *Aristoteles' Politik: Akten Des XI. Symposium Aristotelicum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), pp. 1-27 (also in Schofield, *Saving the City*, pp. 115-40), and D. El Murr, *Savoir Et Gouverner: Essai Sur La Science Politique Platonicienne* (Paris: Vrin, 2014), pp. 103-8.

²⁰ Cf. E. C. Halper, *One and Many in Aristotle's Metaphysics: books alpha-delta*, (Las Vegas: Parmenides Pub., 2009), pp. 1-7, 20-23. Halper regards part-whole concerns as central to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, so would presumably see a closer link between that work and the *Politics*. The importance of Plato's *Statesman* to the *Politics* has recently been surveyed by Kevin Cherry, but he misses the significance of the Eleatic concerns of the Eleatic Stranger, treating the use of the Eleatic Stranger as a distancing mechanism deployed by Plato (K. M. Cherry, *Plato, Aristotle, and the purpose of politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 9-10).

²¹ R. Mayhew, 'Part and Whole in Aristotle's Political Philosophy', *Journal of Ethics*, 1 (1997), 325-40.

²² T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Rev. student edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 9, 120, Chapter 17.

²³ R. Mayhew, *Plato Laws X*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 83-89, Pl. *Leg.* 10.889d6-e1.

²⁴ For example at *Rep.* 5.462a2-e2, and in the earlier discussion of the unity of the city, 4.420b3-421c5; cf. M. Schofield, *Plato: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 212-22.

²⁵ Cf. the Pythagorean table of opposites (*Met.* A.5. 24-27), and the priority of circle and sphere, *De Caelo* 2.4.286b10-25, especially 16-18; this in turn (286b33-287a2) may relate to Aristotle's critique of Hippodamus of Miletus and his use of triads (*Pol.* 2.8.1267b30-39). Aristotle's own *Metaphysics* is not foregrounded here, although Halper regards one-many relations as central to that work (Halper, *One and Many*, pp. 1-7, 20-23). A. Kamp, *Die politische Philosophie des Aristoteles und ihre metaphysischen Grundlagen: Wesenstheorie und Polisordnung*, (Freiburg: Alber, 1985), pp. 296-301, grounds his reading of Aristotle's political thought in the *Metaphysics* rather than the *Categories* (see E. Schütrumpf, 'Review of Kamp, *Die politische Philosophie des Aristoteles und ihre metaphysischen Grundlagen*', *Gnomon*, 61 (1989), 293-96).

²⁶ Cherry, *Plato, Aristotle, and the purpose of politics*, pp. 183-90 contrasts the differing concerns of Alasdair MacIntyre, Martha Nussbaum and Stephen Salkever in rejecting a metaphysical foundation to Aristotle's political thought.

²⁷ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pp. 462-68 (Ch. 46, 'Darknesse from Vain Philosophy', 371-376): see Q. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 396-98, 406-07. Early-modern proponents of absolutism make much use of Aristotle: J. Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955), book 6, R. Filmer, *Patriarcha and other writings*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 159-61, Chapter 10.

²⁸ A. C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: a study in moral theory*, 2nd edn (London: Duckworth, 1985); S. G. Salkever, *Finding the Mean: theory and practice in Aristotelian political philosophy*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 36-53. Salkever separates Aristotle's political thought from his metaphysics and cosmology (49) to escape conclusions he finds unacceptable, that human individuals may have differing but fixed statuses.

²⁹ Carlier, *La notion de pambasileia*, p. 116 notes this view without naming its proponents.

³⁰ Th. 2.37.1, Pl. *Prt.* 320d-328d. See E. Braun, 'Die Summierungstheorie des Aristoteles', *Jahreshefte des Österreichischen Archäologischen Instituts*, 44 (1959), 157-84; D. Cammack, 'Aristotle on the Virtue of the Multitude', *Political Theory*, 41 (2013), 175-202; J. Waldron, 'The Wisdom of the Multitude: Some Reflections on Book 3, Chapter 11 of Aristotle's *Politics*', *Political Theory*, 23 (1995), 563-84; M. S. Lane, 'Claims to rule: the case of the multitude', in M. Deslauriers and P. Destrée (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 247-74.

³¹ Herodotus comments that it was easier to deceive the Athenian multitude than the Spartan king (5.97.2) while Thucydides presents group deliberation leading the Athenian assembly to worse rather than better judgements (as with the Sicilian Expedition, 6.8-25, 8.1).

³² R. G. Mulgan, 'A Note on Aristotle's Absolute Ruler', *Phronesis*, 19 (1974), pp. 66-68; Newell, *Superlative Virtue*, pp. 170-71.

³³ Aristotle omits the punch-line 'show us your claws and teeth'. The hares could, however, claim commensurability *qua* members of a political body rather than *qua* hares. Cf. Vander Waerdt, *Kingship and Philosophy*, pp. 253-54.

³⁴ *Pol.* 1.2.1253a2-7, a25-39. Mulgan, *Aristotle's Absolute Ruler*, opposes Braun, *Die Summierungstheorie des Aristoteles*, on this, arguing that the difference in kind rules out the application of the summation argument. He cites D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), p. 427 on *Met.* 1080a19 to suggest that comparability requires the same kind (in this case, comparability of numbers). But this misses the degree to which Aristotle is problematising the possibility of a difference in kind between king and subject.

³⁵ Following Bonitz, who suggests 'per part (*sic*) καὶ duo vocabula coniunguntur eiusdem fere significationis, ut καὶ explicandi magis quam copulandi vim habere videatur,' offering *Met.* Δ.14.1020b2-3, τὰ ἀκίνητα καὶ τὰ μαθηματικά, as an example in which the καὶ limits the extent of the first noun to the content of the second. (H. Bonitz, *Index Aristotelicus*, 2nd edn (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1955), p. 357).

³⁶ For example the historical *politeiai* of Book 2 are strongly refracted through previous scholarship on them, such as Xenophon's *Lac. Pol.*

³⁷ Different views on kingship in archaic Greece and its literature: R. Osborne, *Greece in the Making, 1200-479 B.C.*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 137-39, 43-44; P. W. Rose, *Class in Archaic Greece*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 180-94.

³⁸ Pittacus appears in Herodotus 1.27.2 as a 'wise warner', and in Plato's *Protagoras* as a sage (343a2) and as the author of the tag Χαλεπὸν ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι (343b7), critiqued by Simonides in Socrates' lengthy report (343b7-347a3), in which he imports the idea of virtue/nobility into a political context, and problematises the distinction between virtuous man and god. Aristotle's presentation of *aisymneteia* is far from historical (F. E. Romer, 'The Aisymneteia: A Problem in Aristotle's Historic Method', *AJPhil*, 103 (1982), 25-46).

³⁹ Eg. 3.15.1268b8-22, a historical discussion of the evolution of kingship.

⁴⁰ Gastaldi, *Il re "signore di tutto"*; Nagle, *Alexander*, p. 124. Nagle argues that the introduction here presents the *pambasileus* as a historical figure, but that the subsequent discussion (3.15-17) examines a theoretical figure.

⁴¹ In addition to the relation between one and all expressed here, κύριος has some work to do. It connotes legal authority in both the household and the political system,

with the noun more explicitly referring to the household. Plato uses the superlative form to refer to political rule. Pl. *Resp.* 8.565a2-3: ὁ δὲ πλεῖστόν τε καὶ κυριώτατον ἐν δημοκρατίᾳ ὅταν περ ἄθροισθῇ. *Kurios* also describes the status of the Athenian assembly, as in Ar. *Ach.* 19, οὔσης κυρίας ἐκκλησίας (cf. M. H. Hansen, *The Athenian Democracy in the Age of Demosthenes: Structure, Principles, and Ideology*, 2nd edn (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1999), pp. 299-303. Although the adjective features extensively in the *Laws*, it does not appear in the *Statesman*.

⁴² Such features may result from re-organisation of the text by later editors.

⁴³ R. D. Hicks and F. Susemihl, *The Politics of Aristotle: a revised text, Books I - V*, (London: Macmillan, 1894), pp. 84-87.

⁴⁴ R. Robinson, *Aristotle: Politics books III & IV*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 56.

⁴⁵ Carlier, *La notion de pambasileia*, p. 107.

⁴⁶ *Pol.* 1.1.1252a7-17 and Pl. *Plt.* 259d4-5.

⁴⁷ Xenophon's exploration of Cyrus' new status after the conquest of Babylon, when he begins to present himself as an absolute monarch, provides a further example of a ruler transcending law in the process of personifying it; Cyrus becomes the 'seeing law' (Xen. *Cyr.* 8.1.22).

⁴⁸ Aristotle examined the problems of changing laws in his assessment of Hippodamus of Miletus' ideal *politeia* (2.8.1268b22-1269a28); he disputes the analogy between law and craft both there and at 3.16.1287a32-b8.

⁴⁹ Especially in discussing the rewards for introducing new laws in Hippodamos of Miletus' ideal constitution, 2.8.1268b22-1269a12.

⁵⁰ Aristotle disparages Lycurgus for failing to incorporate Spartan women into his law-code effectively (2.9.1270a6-8) and for simply copying the earlier Cretan law-code (2.10.1271b24-27). But Lycurgus' role is also minimised in Plato's *Laws*, where he is one of three saviours of the Spartan constitution, albeit one described as a god (*Laws* 3.691d8-e1).

⁵¹ The limitation of the extent of the multitude generating collective wisdom may pose a problem for strictly summative interpretations of the argument (such as Cammack, *Aristotle on the Virtue of the Multitude*). But the type of collective feast envisaged could be more like a Spartan mess to which members bring their hunting catches than

the large-scale Athenian tribal feasts to which ἐστίασις συμφορητός (a29) is usually linked, cf. Lane, *Claims to rule*, pp. 254-56.

⁵² Newman, *The Politics of Aristotle*, ad 1287b1 sees this as a reference to Hdt.

3.82.3.

⁵³ Though *Laws* 4.713e2 presents being *astasiastos* as a form of life available only in the golden age under the rule of the shepherd-king, which the rule of law must attempt to imitate.

⁵⁴ 3.16.1287a8-12, b35-36. The anti-monarchists' concern with τὸ κύριον ἓνα πάντων εἶναι (1287a11) suggests that these objections are central to Aristotle's own concerns. One can also see links with the *Laws* and its worries about the lack of individual incorruptibility.

⁵⁵ This is one of several points where the distinction between heroic monarchy and *pambasileia* looks somewhat overstated; the decline of heroic monarchy (3.14.1285b3-13) follows a similar pattern.

⁵⁶ This dependence on other texts distinguishes Aristotle's social science from his natural science.

⁵⁷ Cf. Xenophon *Hiero* 2.9-11, 10.2-4

⁵⁸ *EN* 8.7.1158b36-1159a6.

⁵⁹ Hdt. 1.100.2; Xen. *Cyr.* 8.2.13-14.

⁶⁰ Deioces needed to exclude the friends who might have realised that he is no better than them (Herodotus 1.99.2); Amasis' friends berated him for being insufficiently regal (2.173.2). Cyrus too uses his friends, bound to him by his generosity, as extra organs of perception (*Cyr.* 8.2.10-11).

⁶¹ Cf *Laws* 3.695d2-3, 3.697c9-d1, where good rule brings friendship and community, extreme rule destroys it.

⁶² Newell and Vander Waerdt both conclude that this part of the *Politics* argues against modern commentators who position Aristotle as a proponent of the practical wisdom of the many as opposed to the science of the few. Newell, *Superlative Virtue*, pp. 175-76, Vander Waerdt, *Kingship and Philosophy*, pp. 272-73.

⁶³ Herodotus 1.96-102, Isocrates *Helen*; see C. Attack, 'The Discourse of Kingship in Classical Athenian thought', *Histos*, 8 (2014), pp. 340-53).

⁶⁴ At no point in this discussion is the specific excellence required defined, but it surely carries over the *politikē dunamis* from 3.13.

⁶⁵ Jowett has 'The whole is naturally superior to the part, and he who has this pre-eminence is in the relation of a whole to a part.'

⁶⁶ Although Aristotle presents this as a historical example, Herodotus (5.92) wraps it in Socles' speech to the Spartans against tyranny, thus emphasising its status as discourse.

⁶⁷ Atack, *Discourse of Kingship*, pp. 341-42.

⁶⁸ Vander Waerdt, *Kingship and Philosophy*, pp. 264-65, conceding that this Thomist reading pushes far beyond anything Aristotle himself says.

⁶⁹ *Il.* 1.121 (δῖος), 489 (διογενής), 176, 2.98, 196, 4.63 (διοτρεφέων βασιλῆων), *Od.* 4.156, 236, etc (Ἀτρεΐδη Μενέλαε διοτρεφές).

⁷⁰ Hes. *Th.* 81-92.

⁷¹ S. Benardete, *Herodotean Inquiries*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), pp. 66-67 explores these stories as attempts to link 'the high and noble... and the base and mean'.

⁷² Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 107, with his 'ninth Law of Nature... *That every man acknowledge other for his Equall by Nature*'.

⁷³ Cf. Neo-Aristotelian arguments, such as Nussbaum's capabilities argument, which ignore Aristotle's hierarchical account of human statuses: M. C. Nussbaum, 'Nature, Function and Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution', in G. Patzig (ed.), *Aristoteles' 'Politik'*, pp. 152-86.